UNCLASSIFIED

R 394

Q. What will the configuration and capability of the F-15s either previously sold or to be sold to the Saudis as a result of the recent decision to provide Saudi Arabia with additional apability?

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GIPC/MR
REVIEWED BY F Schmeltzer DATE 7/2/85

A. The basic configuration of the aircraft remains unchanged, but with the proposed enhancements, their capabilities will be increased.

-- Conformal Fuel Tanks (CFTs) fit alongside the fuselage, under the wing, and provide an additional 9750 pounds of fuel. These bolt on tanks are interchangeable and easily mounted on the ground, but cannot be jettisoned airborne. The advantage of these tanks is that they increase range/endurance of the aircraft 40-70% (depending on type mission and profile) with very little reduction in performance (empty weight is insignificant, as is subsonic drag - supersonic drag is equal to one external 600 gallon tank).

-- AIM-9L is an all aspect, improved version of the Sidewinder that the Saudis have purchased for their F-15s and now have on their F-5 aircraft (AIM-9P-3). The significance of this enhancement is that with the AIM-9L the F-15 has a near head on infrared capability. Consequently, their probability of kill in an engagement is improved, vulnerability is decreased, and their ability to defend with a limited number of aircraft is greatly increased.

-- Multiple Ejection Racks (MER) expand the capacity of each of the three hard-points stations to carry a greater number of air-to-ground munitions. MERS would greatly increase the aircraft's flexibility and allow it to "swing" to the air-to-ground role against area targets (such as a mobile force, troops in the open, or close air support), as the need arose. In its present

UNCLASSIFIED

configuration the F-15 could carry one air-to-ground munition on each of its three stations. Three MK-84 2000 pound bombs could be carried and would represent an effective load for point targets. However, loading three area type munitions would be an unsatisfactory load for attacking area targets (these munitions are small, designed to spread over large areas, and must be carried in large large numbers to be effective). MERs would allow up to six area type munitions to be carried on each station, or a total of 18. - If the F-15 were modified, it is possible to add MERs to each of the two (2) CFTs. In this configuration the maximum number of munitions that could be carried is 22; however, the AIM-7 missile could not be carried; and the F-15 would lose much of its self protection.

-- Tankers, or an aerial refueling capability that is compatible with the F-15 will increase the aircraft's range, but more importantly its endurance or cap time will also be increased. This is important for two reasons:

a. Maintaining an airborne cap for any length of time, places extremely high demands on aircraft resources. Extending the duration of flight for the cap aircraft greatly reduces that impact on resources (sortie duration has less impact than sortie numbers), hence the need for aerial refueling.

b. All three projected F-15 bases are on the periphery of the country, will be prime targets of any attack on that region, and will probably be unuseable for use after the first attack. Consequently, all subsequent efforts will probably eminate from the emaining two bases. Without aerial refueling (and CFTs) the

distances involved would make defense of the area under attack difficult if not impossible.

-- AWACS does not directly affect the capability of the F-15, but does enhance the overall ability of an air defense system to protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

R (376)

Q: From comments made recently by Secretary of Defense Weinberger and others, we know that the Administration is weighing the possibility of selling certain offensive equipment to the Saudi Arabians for their yet to be delivered F-15 planes.

What will be the delivery schedule on these planes?

A: The first six (of a total of 62) Saudi Arabian F-15s are scheduled to be delivered to Luke AFB, outside Phoenix, Arizona, beginning in September 1981 to accommodate initial Saudi F-15 pilot training. All six of these aircraft are then to be delivered to Saudi Arabia approximately one year later. The first in-country deliveries of F-15s to Saudi Arabia are currently scheduled to begin in January 1982 and run through the second quarter of CY 84 (only 60 F-15s are to be delivered to Saudi Arabia; the remaining two aircraft will be retained in the US as attrition spares).

F Schmoke 7/2/85